

Japan Update 2015
Japan-America Society of Indiana

Conference Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Japan-America Society of Indiana (JASI) presented the Japan Update 2015 Conference on February 25, 2015 with the support of **Sasakawa Peace Foundation** and the **National Association of Japan-America Societies (NAJAS)**. The conference was attended by more than 200 guests from Japan and across the country. Special appreciation is expressed to the Japanese executives who traveled from Japan to speak in the program.



Additional Supporting Organizations: Consulate General of Japan at Chicago; Indiana Economic Development Association; Indiana Manufacturers Association; Japan External Trade Organization, Chicago.



Indiana Governor, Mike Pence

With a focus on a forecast for Japan, Indiana, and Asia presented by distinguished speakers from industry, government, and business, the conference underscored the continuing strong Japan-US relationship. The Honorable Mike Pence, Governor of the State of Indiana, offered evidence of this strong relationship in the 240 Japanese facilities scattered across Indiana and the more than 50,000 jobs those facilities create.

Governor Pence also gave a final farewell to The Honorable Masaharu Yoshida, Consul General of Japan at Chicago, whose term in the Midwest is ending. Consul General Yoshida reiterated the importance of the Japan-US relationship, stating that Indiana is number one in jobs from Japanese companies and citing a positive 3.7% increase in such employment.



Consul General Masaharu Yoshida

Reviewing the favorable economic and political climate of Japan, various panelists from government and industry conveyed a sense of optimism for the Japan-US alliance as well as the expansion of Japanese businesses in Indiana. The anticipated visit of Prime Minister Abe to the United States underscores the strength of this alliance to encourage investment in Japan.



Takeo Nishitani, Weber Shandwick Japan

As a special speaker from Japan, Takeo Nishitani, Chairman of Weber Shandwick Japan, emphasized the confidence of the Abe administration for economic growth. Although Nishitani acknowledged Japan's national debt as a major

problem, he and other speakers confided that the country's economy is slowly recovering and that most Japanese people are optimistic about the future, particularly as a result of securing the 2020 Olympics. Takeo Nishitani reported that the "Japan brand," or image of Japan, is ranked first among all countries as the most recognized for its many positive attributes.

Kevin Butt, as General Manager/Regional Environmental Director of Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing North America, examined environmental sustainability. He emphasized the importance of being a responsible corporate citizen by making a product that is sustainable. Citing specific examples from Toyota reducing the carbon footprint of vehicles, re-use of old batteries, reforestation of manufacturing land and green buildings, he encouraged businesses reach out by telling the story of how products made in Indiana are making a difference in environmental sustainability through materials, water, carbon and biodiversity.



Kevin Butt, Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing North America

As for Indiana, the consensus was that a number of conditions favor the potential for expansion of Japanese businesses. The partnerships with Indiana are strengthened by the favorable corporate tax, the infrastructure as the crossroads for transportation, shared values, and human capital.

Government and industry panelists shared not just data and statistics regarding the success of Japanese businesses in Indiana, but also personal stories of partnering. Participants offered perspectives on the globalization and localization of Japanese manufacturing and business.

Tony Suzuki, Director of the State of Indiana Japan Office, presented statistics on how manufacturing drives Japanese investment. He explained that manufacturing accounts for 30% of the state's GDP and that 11% of all automobiles produced in the U.S. are made in Indiana. Furthermore, he stated that in the next three years, an additional 4,073 jobs are projected. Existing Japanese business are also expanding, and he agreed with prior speakers that much of this is due to the fact that Indiana is a "right to work" state, it is the crossroads of a transportation network, low corporate taxes, and even great golf courses.



Left: Tom Easterday, Subaru of Indiana Automotive
Right: Tony Suzuki, State of Indiana Japan Office



Yoshiki Takada
SMC Corporation

Yoshiki Takada, President of SMC Corporation, and Shinichi Iizuka, President of TOA Industries Co., Limited, Japan and CEO & Chairman of TOA (USA) LLC, both gave personal testimonies to the warm and welcoming attitudes of Hoosiers as well as their strong work ethics. This seemed to be the point most reiterated throughout the conference; that the strength of the Japan-Indiana relationship was in the enduring personal connections and friendships built between the Japanese and Hoosiers. Multiple speakers commented that while producing a quality product is important, the key to a successful

international company is to be a great global and corporate citizen, not simply investing, but integrating.

JASI thanked the distinguished speakers, moderators, and panelists, especially those traveling great distances. Their participation made the 2015 Japan Update an informative forum for discussion of developments for Japan and Indiana, as well as key issues for the Japan-US alliance.

The Japan Update 2015 Conference was made possible through the generous support of the following sponsors:



Shinichi Iizuka
TOA Industries Co., Limited, Japan

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